

## REPRESENTATION OF IDENTITIES: A STUDY OF LANGUAGE ON WHEELS

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### Abstract

*Language written on domestic and commercial vehicles attracts people in the surrounding and is a source of entertainment. It conveys different messages and has hidden meanings also. Owners and drivers get different things written on their vehicles. This paper proposes that writings on the wheels besides attracting people represent identities of their owners and drivers. It is qualitative and exploratory study. Data were collected from 100 vehicles through observation from five crowded areas i-e Mall Road, Canal Road, Jail Road and main boulevard Gulberg of Lahore (Pakistan) through purposive sampling technique. A list of all the writings from these 100 vehicles was formed for analysis. For theoretical framework, Fairclough's three-dimensional model in critical discourse analysis (CDA) was followed to interpret identities. Analysis of the collected data shows that these writings include phrase, verse, quotes in different styles of calligraphy and art. Analysis also highlights that people reveal their social, political, religious, cultural and intellectual identities through these inscriptions. These writings are not for just decoration and fun sake, but they convey hidden meanings too.*

**Key Words:** Language, Wheels, Critical Discourse Analysis, Identities

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Language as a social phenomenon performs five functions described by Leech (1974). These include informational, phatic, directive, expressive and aesthetic functions (Essays, 2017). Writing is one of the mediums that people use to achieve these functions. Different types of writings or inscriptions on vehicles is a common practice in Pakistan. Owners and drivers of

these vehicles get different things written on their vehicles. This study discusses different types of writings on vehicles and it explores how these writings represent different identities of the owners and drivers of these vehicles.

### ***1.1 Statement of the Problem***

Pakistan is famous for tradition of vehicle decoration. Vehicles with different inscriptions or statements on the vehicles are a very common sight on the roads. These writings include varieties of linguistic patterns. The present study intends to explore these patterns to see different identities of vehicle owners and drivers presented through these writings.

### ***1.2 Aims and Objectives***

The objectives of the research are:

- 1) To find linguistic patterns and techniques used for writings on the vehicles
- 2) To explore different identities manifested through the use of language on wheels

### ***1.3 Research Questions***

The research answers the following questions based on the objectives of the study:

- 1) What type of language and techniques are used for inscriptions on vehicles?
- 2) How does vehicular language represent different identities of vehicle owners and drivers?

### ***1.4 Significance of the Study***

Most of the previous works available deal only *Truck Art* in Pakistan. Very little is present about language use on domestic vehicles. The present study fills this gap. It is significant because it analyses vehicular language to trace different identities of owners and drivers of light transport vehicles (LTV) from a different perspective. It is different from previous studies in way that it uses framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to highlight hidden identities through Fairclough's three dimensional model.

### ***1.5 Delimitation of the Study***

The research is delimited to the writings on vehicles (LTV) inside Lahore, Pakistan. It focuses only those writings that reveal something about owners or drivers of these vehicles. It neither focuses inscriptions from the manufacturing company that include specifications of the vehicles nor the language of different advertisements displayed on these vehicles.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Decoration of vehicles is a common practice in many countries including Pakistan. This practice is limited to minor decorations throughout world, though a few countries like Indonesia, the Philippines and countries in Central and South America decorate vehicles ornately (Elias, 2003). Bicycle rickshaws in Bangladesh and trucks are painted in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan in South Asia. Pakistani Truck art is unique because of its pervasiveness. Private

and commercial vehicles including buses, vans, taxis, animal carts and even pushcarts of juice vendors are also heavily decorated in Pakistan (Elias, 2005).

Shahzad (2009) reports that a French native (Dr Vincent Ioos) got inspired by Pakistani Truck art during his three years' stay in Pakistan and adorned his 1974 Beetle dubbed Foxy named as Foxy Shahzadi following indigenous Truck Art. On his departure, he carried Foxy Shahzadi to celebrate artistic and cultural potential of Pakistan and to promote Pak-French friendship. Foxy Shahzadi represented ethnic heritage of Pakistan through floral motifs, pictures of Quaid-i-Azam and Allama Iqbal, images of Pakistani and French flags and an inscription *Maa Ki Dua Janaat Ki Hawa*, 'mother's prayer is breeze from paradise'.

Public vehicles with funny bumper stickers, life situation complaints, hilarious statements are a very common sight on roads these days (Anonymous, 2018). Though drivers of these vehicles are mostly illiterate, yet they manage to decorate their vehicles with poetry and prose that is often emotional, hilarious, sarcastic and metaphoric (Bashir, 2011). Rahman (2010) in his study on Pakistani truck art concludes that these inscriptions are indicator of the worldview of drivers and painters of trucks. Thus vehicular literature represents identities of their owners and drivers.

Identity is a social performance that is achieved by drawing on appropriate linguistic and other semiotic resources (Paltridge, 2012). People through these ways display who they are to each other. Identity links the level of individual with the social (Zotzmann & O'Regan, 2016). Human communication is more about conveying who we are, which geographical, ethnic and social communities we belong to; where we stand in relation to ethical and moral questions; or where our loyalties are in political terms (De Fina, 2011). People display their identities through fashion, cosmetics, and their belongings and even through their use of language, though they do not exhibit these subjectivities on equal terms. People vary because of their social position and their access to economic, cultural, and linguistic and number of other sources. Through these resources, people show different degrees of recognition (Zotzmann & O'Regan, 2016).

Fairclough (1989) considers language as a 'social process'. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) seems to be an appropriate choice for analysis of these processes because identity constructions are loaded with ideology and power relations. Besides poststructuralist, CDA is concerned with those sociolinguistic perspectives also that do not focus upon 'language or the use of language in and for themselves, but upon the partially linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures' (Wodak & Fairclough, 2013).

Previous studies on vehicle decoration in Pakistani context include *Art on Wheels* (von Oppen, 1992), *On wings of diesel: spiritual space and religious imagination in Pakistani truck decoration* (Elias, 2003), *On Wings of Diesel: The Decorated Trucks of Pakistan* (Elias, 2005), *Language on Wheels: Inscriptions on Pakistani Trucks as a Window into Popular Worldview* (Rahman, 2010) '*Vehicular literature*' an expression of popularism (Bashir, 2011), *Art on wheels: One man's treasure* (Taha, 2012), *Art on Wheels: Painting Pakistan's Truck "Brides"* (Khan, 2018), *Impact of truck art, as popular culture on Pakistani society* (Sheikh, 2018) and *7 Types of Statements Written behind Pakistani Vehicles* (Anonymous, 2018). These studies are significant because they urged researcher to explore identities which are represented through these writings on vehicles and this area was not explored previously.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### ***3.1 Nature of study***

It is an exploratory study that follows qualitative paradigm and descriptive research design. It explores in detail writings on the vehicles and the supposed purpose behind these writings.

### ***3.2 Population***

All intra-city vehicles (LTV) used for transportation in Lahore from Pakistan were population of the study.

### ***3.3 Sample***

Data of the study consisted of inscriptions collected from sample of 100 vehicles selected from the population. Sample was selected through purposive sampling technique.

### ***3.4 Research Instrument***

Data was noted and collected through observation. Observation sheet and field notes were used to document observations. In some cases, the inscriptions on vehicles were photographed by the author.

### ***3.5 Data Collection***

For data collection, five busy points on roads of Lahore city were selected. These roads included Mall Road (upper and lower), Canal Road, Jail Road and Main Boulevard Gulberg. Data was collected at Assembly Hall Chowk (Upper Mall Road), Data Derbar Chowk (Lower Mall Road), Campus Bridge (Canal Road), Shadman Chowk (Jail Road) and Liberty Chowk (Main Boulevard Gulberg) during office and school hours so that the target vehicles can be easily located and observed.

## **4. DATA ANALYSIS**

The collected data through observation sheet was arranged and preserved for data analysis. The detail of data from 100 vehicles has been shown in Table 4.1 below:

*Table 4.1 Detail of Collected Data*

<b>Sr.</b>	<b>Type of Vehicle</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Inscriptions</b>
1	Car	Assembly Hall Chowk	English	Mian G
2	Car		Arabic	يا الله , يا محمد (ya/ Allah, ya /Muhammad)
3	Van		Punjabi	صدقہ پنجنتن پاک دا (sadqa panjtan pak da)
4	Car		English	Arrive alive, don't text and drive
5	Coaster		Urdu	ماں کی دعا، جنت کی ہوا (maa ki dua, jannat ki hawa )
6	Car		Urdu	سلام یا حسین (salam ya Hussain)

7	Car		English	GIKI
8	Van		Arabic	ما شاء الله (mashAllah)
9	Car		English	I don't drive fast but I fly low. U©ME
10	Car		Urdu	تبدیلی آ نہیں رہی تبدیلی آ گئی ہے (tabdeli aa nahi rahi tabdeli aa gae hai)
11	Super carry		Urdu	پاس کر یا برداشت کر (pass kr ya bardasht kar)
12	Car		English	Attorney at Law
13	Rickshaw		Urdu	الله بادشاہ (Allah badshah)
14	Car		Arabic	نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ (nasrun min Allahi, wa fat'hun kareeb)
15	Car		English	Press
16	Car		English	G Gill G (image)
17	Rickshaw		Punjabi	رل تے گئے آن پر چس بڑی آئے اے (rul te gaye ann, per chas bari ai ey)
18	Car		English	Bhai Bhai Group
19	Car		English	Knight Rider
20	Rickshaw		Urdu	گجر بادشاہ (gujjar badshah)
21	Car	Data	English	KLAIR
22	Car	Derbar	Arabic	لبیک یا رسول الله (labbaik ya rasool Allah)
23	Car	Chowk	English	Sunny Prince
24	Car		Arabic	الحسين مصباح الهدى (al hussain misbah ul huda)
25	Rickshaw		Punjabi	تو لنگھ جا ساڈی خیراے (tu lang ja,ADI khair ey)
26	Coaster		English	How am I driving
27	Car		Urdu	یا علی مدد (یا علی مدد)
28	Car		English	Doctor
29	Car		English	RAVIAN
30	Car		Urdu	Allah (Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Hussain)
31	Car		English	TIK TOK

32	Car		Urdu,	خیمہ سادات (kheima e sadaat). UCP,
33	Super Carry		English Urdu	University of Central Punjab یہ سب میری ماں/میرے ماں باپ کی دعا ہے (ye sab meri maan/ mere maan baap ki dua hai)
34	Car		Punjabi	مانواں تھنڈیاں چھا نواں (maanwan thandian chanwan)
35	Van		Punjabi	تے ہن اسی کون ہو گئے (te hun asi kon hogaye)
36	Van		English	Allied CAT
37	Rickshaw		English	Go Nawaz Go
38	Car		Arabic, Urdu	فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَان (fabiayyi alai rabbi kuma tukaziban) اور تم اپنے پروردگار کی کون کون سی نعمت کو جھٹلاؤ گے۔
39	Bike		Punjabi	ملنگنی داتا دی (malangni data di)
40	Car		English	L
41	Bike	Campus Bridge	English	Adnan
42	Super Carry		English	Daily nawa-e-waqat
43	Car		Urdu	پاک فوج تجھے سلام (pak fouj tujhe salam)
44	Bike		English	CM Office
45	Car		English	Punjab Group of Colleges
46	Car		English	WAJID
47	Car		English	S & D ALI WARIS
48	Car		English	ZANI HADI
49	Car		English	Aitchisonian
50	Car		English	I ♥ Convent of Jesus and Mary
51	Car		Arabic	الله هو (Allah hu)
52	Car		Urdu	حق ولی، سچ ولی، خواجہ جی سرکار رح (haq wali, sach wali, Khawaja G sarkar)
53	Car		English	Mian Bablu
54	Van		English	HOW AM I DRIVING, COMPLAINTS TOLL FREE NO 0800-72572, 144
55	Car		Punjabi	نوکری غازی دا (nouker ghazi da)

56	Car		English	RAJPOOT AWAIS
57	Car		Urdu	جیے بھٹو (Jiye Bhutto)
58	Car		English	RAI AK
59	CA		English	GUJJAR
60	Car		Numeric	786
61	Car	Shadman Chowk	Arabic	لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ (labbayka Allāhumma labbayk. labbayk lā sharīka laka labbayk)
62	Jeep		English	NO MORE MISTAKES
63	Rickshaw		Punjabi	پیار تے کراں پر تنخواہ بڑی تھوڑی اے (pyar te kran per tankhwa bari thori ey)
64	Car		English	Crescentarian
65	Car		English	Engineer, UET
66	Car		Urdu	مجھے دعوت اسلامی سے پیار ہے (mujhe dawat e islami se payar hai)
67	Car		English	Advocate/ Advocate of High court
68	Car		Punjabi	کعبہ علی دا، جنت حسین دی (Kaaba Ali da, jannat Hussain di)
69	Car		English	Pakistan Army
70	Car		English	NUML
71	Car		English	With Pride, RAKOOB
72	Car		Arabic	الصلوة و السلام عليك يا رسول الله (assalatu wassalamu alaika ya rasoolallah)
73	Van		English	KASHI BABA, GORI BROTHERS, 0348 4014859, (image)
74	Car		English	GTK 007
75	Car		English, Arabic	NOT DRUNK, FORMANITE, لا تنس ذكر الله (La tansa zikar Allah)
76	Car		English	FASTIAN
77	Car		English	BERETTA
78	Rickshaw		Urdu	شاہ جمال سرکار (Shah Jamal sarker)
79	Rickshaw		Urdu	زندگی کا مزہ تب ہی آتا ہے جب موت کی انگلی پکڑ کر چلیں (zindgi ka maza tab hi aata ha)

				jab mout ki ungli pakar ker chalen) صبح اٹھتے ہی میرے سر پر ہاتھ رکھ دینا ماں نہ جانے کس گلی میں زندگی کی آخری شام ہو جائے (subha uththe hi mere sir per hath rakh dena maan na jane kis gali mein zindgi ki akhri sham ho jaye
80	Van		Urdu	(fasla rakhen werna peyar ho jaye ga)
81	Car	Liberty Chowk	English	ARY NEWS
82	Super Carry		Urdu	دیکھ مگر پیار سے (dekh magar peyar se)
83	Car		Arabic	یا ابا الفضل العباس (ya aba Alfazal al Abbas)
84	Rickshaw		Urdu	جلنے والے کا منہ کالا (jalne wale ka monh kala)
85	Van		English	Staff Duty
86	Bike		English	D/O Advocate General Punjab LHR High Court
87	Car		English	LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, STEPHEN GILL, NADAB GILL
88	Car		Arabic	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ (lā ilāha illā-llāh, muḥammad ur rasūlu-llāh)
89	Car		English	Extreme Gamer
90	Car		English	LUMS
91	Car		Arabic	ما شاء الله تبارك الله (Masha Allah, tabarak Allah)
92	Car		English	Jaydee
93	Car		English	Sial
94	Car		Urdu	کرماں والا سرکار (karman wala sarkar)
95	Van		Urdu	گنج بخش فیضِ عالم (Ganj Bakhsh e Faiz e Alam)
96	Car		Urdu	میرے لئے اللہ ہی کافی ہے (mere liye Allah hi kafi ha)
97	Car		English	UMT
98	Rickshaw		Urdu	ہزاروں سال نرگس اپنی بے نوری پہ روتی ہے بڑی مشکل سے ہوتا ہے چمن میں دیدہ ور پیدا (hazaron sal nargis apni be noori pe roti ha bari mushkil se hota ha chaman mein deeda wer paida)



99	Car	Urdu	پاکستان زندہ باد (Pakistan zinda bad)
100	Car	Urdu	ہم سب کے سب ہمارے، ہم رب کے رب ہمارے (hum sab ke sab hamaray, hum rab ke rab hamaray)

Analysis of the above-mentioned inscriptions was done at two levels. At first (surface) level, it was analyzed to see linguistic patterns and techniques used by the owners and drivers of vehicles to express their thoughts. At second (deep) level, the data was interpreted to explore different identities manifested by owners and drivers through these writings.

#### **4.1 Techniques and Patterns of Language**

Language of vehicular writings follows different patterns and techniques. Collected data reveals that these patterns can be divided into different categories. Their detail is as below:

##### **4.1.1 Phrases**

Vehicular writings in form of phrases include one word or two words. These phrases belong to different lifestyles. The prominent of these can be categorized as below:

- i) **Personal Names:** Some people prefer their names to be written on their vehicles. Some name can be seen written with initial capital letter. For example, *Adnan* (sr. 41 Table 4.1). Sometimes names are written in all capital letters, such as *WAJID* (sr. 46 Table 4.1). Some people write their nicknames on their vehicles, such as *Sunny Prince*, *Jaydee* (sr. 23, 92 Table 4.1). Some people opt both real and nickname together, for example *Zani Hadi* (sr. 48 Table 4.1).
- ii) **Castes:** Some phrases on vehicles indicate castes of the owners and drivers. Sometimes single word is used to show caste such as *GUJJAR* and *Sial* (sr. 59, 93 Table 4.1). Some people get their caste written with some titles. For example, *Mian G*, *G Gill G* and *Gujjar Badshah* (sr. 1, 16, 20 Table 4.1). Sometimes castes follow personal or nicknames too, such as, *RAJPOOT AWAIS* and *RAI AK*, (sr. 56, 58 Table 4.1).
- iii) **Professions:** Some people opt their professions to be written instead of anything else. Examples from the data can be cited as *Attorney at Law* and *Doctor* (sr. 12, 28 Table 4.1). Some people like to mention name of the institute with profession also such as, *Engineer*, *UET* (sr. 65 Table 4.1).
- iv) **Educational Institutes:** People like to share the names of institutes on their vehicles also. Examples of such cases from the data include *GIKI* (*Ghulam Ishaq Kahn Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology*), *UCP* (*University of Central Punjab*), *Punjab Group of Colleges*, *NUML* (*National University of Modern Languages*), *LUMS* (*Lahore University of Management Sciences* and *UMT* (*University of Management and Technology*) as shown in Table 4.1. It is done either by writing complete names (sr. 45, 49) or abbreviations (sr. 7, 70, 90, 97) or sometimes both together (sr. 32) in Table 4.1 above. Some people show their affiliation to their institutes through titles like *RAVIAN* (*Government College University*), *Crescentarian* (*The Crescent School*) and *FASTIAN* (*FAST*) as shown in examples (sr. 29, 64, 76) in Table 4.1 above.

- v) Offices / Govt. Departments: People associated to different public or private sector offices prefer to write the names of their offices on their vehicles such as, *Press, Daily Nawa-e-waqat, CM Office, ARY NEWS* and *D/O Advocate General Punjab, Lahore High court* (sr. 15, 42, 44, 81,86 Table 4.1).
- vi) Brand Names: Some people prefer certain brand names to be written on their vehicles. These are written either alone or with some adjectives that express their feelings towards these brands. *Knight Rider, KLAIR, TIK TOK, Allied CAT, with pride RAKOOB* and *BERETTA* and (sr. 19, 21, 31, 36, 71, 77 Table 4.1) are examples of such cases.
- vii) Slogans: Some patriotic slogans are found written that show someone's love to Pakistan or a particular department of the country. *Pak fouj tujhe salam, Pakistan Army* and *Pakistan Zinda Bad* (sr. 43, 69, 99). Some people express their like or dislike of any political party through different slogans such as *tabdeli aa nahi rahi, tabdeli aa gayi hai, Go Nawaz Go* and *Jiye Bhutto* (sr. 10, 37, 57) as shown in Table 4.1 above. Similarly, people express their likeness of different religious sects through slogans. *salam ya hussain, Mashallah, Allah Badshah, Ya Ali madad, Nouker ghazi da* and *Shah Jamal Sarkar* (sr. 6, 8, 13, 27, 55, 78) are a few examples of such cases shown in Table 4.1 above.
- viii) Numerals: Use of numerals can also be seen on vehicles. These numerals denote some lucky numbers of the owners, numerical value of Arabic letters of Holy Quran (786), vehicle fleet no (144) or sometimes contact number to complain at. Examples of such cases can be seen at sr.54, 60 and sr. 73 in table 4.1 above.

#### **4.1.2 Sentences**

Besides phrases, vehicular writings include sentences also. These sentences can be described as below:

- i) Quotes: Quotes give us a ray of hope when we are in pensive mood or in a distressing situation. Inspirational quotes activate an emotional change in our minds and hearts and motivate us for action. Some vehicle owners and drivers get some quotations written on their vehicles to share fruitful messages with others. For example, "*Arive alive, don't text and drive*" and "*maa ki dua, janat ki hawa*" (sr.4, 5 Table 4.1). Sheikh (2018) *very beautifully sums up this practice "from very simple to complicated, from very crude to polite, messages are delivered to society. Issues are challenged, taboos are addressed, and mores are transferred in a very entertaining way"*.
- ii) Verses: Verses are lines composed metrically in poetic form. Many people use to write verses of famous Urdu and Punjabi poets on their vehicles. Sometimes these verses are written as they are. Example at sr. 98 in Table 4.1 refers to such case. Sometimes people adapt them according to their own mindset and knowledge. Verses at sr. 79 in table 4.1 above are examples of such adaptation.

In addition to these poetic verses, some people prefer verses from holy books i-e the Bible, and the Holy Quran. *nasrun min Allahi, wa fat'hun kareeb* (نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ), *fabiayyi alai rabbi kuma tukaziban* (اور تم اپنے رب کی کون کون سی نعمت کو جھٹلاؤ گے۔ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ) and

*la tansa ziker illah* (لا تنس ذكر الله) shown in table 4.1 (sr.14, 38, 75) are examples of verses from the Holy Quran whereas *Lord is my shepherd* (sr. 87, Table 4.10) is example of a verse taken from the Bible.

### ***4.1.3 Graphics***

Graphics are patterns of art that include text and pictures. Some people opt these graphics to be drawn on their vehicles. These include certain famous logos some floral patterns as shown in Figures 1 and 2 below:



*Figure 1.* Logo of Apple Company. Photograph by the authors



*Figure 2.* Image of Eagle. Photograph by the authors

These graphics have a twofold appeal. They represent tradition of vehicle decoration on one side and response to religious and cultural imagery on the other side. This response can be described as the relationship between a visual object and the one who sees it. In this regard, Freedberg (1989) states “we must consider not only beholders’ symptoms and behavior, but also the effectiveness, efficacy, and vitality of images themselves”. Some people prefer abstract patterns and symbols on their vehicles as shown in Figure 3 below:



*Figure 3.* Abstract Pattern. Photograph by the authors

These abstract patterns can be perceived and they convey some messages or ideas. Chidester (1992) rightly paraphrases Paul Ricoeur that images are perceived, and perceptions give rise to symbols, and symbols give rise to thought.

#### ***4.1.4 Calligraphic Art***

Calligraphy is decorative writing. Presently it is done through the use of technology. It includes different fonts. Some people prefer simple fonts that can be easily read whereas some people select complex fonts to get text written in an attractive way. One such example word is the name 'Allah' (see Figure 4 below) written in religious calligraphy that it reveals five names i.e known as Panjtan Pak (Muhammad 'PBUH', his daughter Fatima, her husband Ali, and their sons Hassan and Hussain):



*Figure 4. Allah written in religious calligraphy. Photograph by the authors*

Similarly, some verses of holy Quran or any of the ninety names of Allah and his Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are also written in different calligraphic styles.

Besides the above mentioned, another technique used in vehicular art is the use of different languages. Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi and English are common languages. The choice of language is personal and subjective that seems nothing to do with education, or economic status of the owners and drivers. However, data indicate that youngsters opt English language whereas rickshaw and van drivers prefer Urdu and Punjabi languages although some exceptions can also be found in this regard.

Selection of colors is also one of the techniques. Red, white and black colors are very common. Blue, green and yellow colors can also be found but very rare. Religious slogans are mainly found written in red color. Verses from the Holy Quran are found written in white color. Some people opt fluorescent colors to attract others towards their writings as these glow in the light.

Another prominent technique used for writing something on the vehicles is position and place. Top position of front and rear screens is reserved for religious writings. This mostly includes verses from the Holy Quran. Names of Allah and his Prophet (peace be upon him) like *Allah* (الله), *Muhammad* (محمد), *Ya Hayyiu* (ياحي), *Ya Qayyum* (ياقيوم) are written on top corners of front or rear screens as shown in Figure 5 below:



*Figure 5. Religious words written on windshield. Photograph by the authors*

Personal names, castes, or other slogans are written in the middle of rear screen. Sometimes they are written diagonally in the right or left position of rear screen. Quotations, poetic verses, and sentences are written on the rear screen. Graphics are also pasted on the rear screen. However, sometimes they are also found on fuel tank lid, bonnet or on any of the sides of vehicles.

#### ***4.2 Vehicular Literature and Identity***

This section deals with different identities that are represented through vehicular literature. Collected data were analyzed by following three-dimensional model (description, interpretation, explanation) presented by Fairclough (1995). Different identities were traced and their description is as follows:

- i) Personal names: Names reveal personal identity of people in a society (Rahman, 2013). Name is a descriptor that allows people to know who we are. Example words *Adnan*, *Wajid*, *Ali Waris* (sr.41, 46, 47 table 4.1) from the data reveal that people write their names on their vehicles to let others know, who they are. Some people express the same through their nicknames such as, *Sunny Prince* and *Jaydee* (sr.23, 92 table 4.1). It is notable that only male names are written even though the vehicle is owned or driven by a female.
- ii) Castes: Caste is a form of social stratification based on tribal, clan or family names. People express their identity through their castes also. *Mian G*, *Rajpoot Awais*, *Gujjar* (sr.1, 56, 59 table 4.1) are examples from the data. Sometimes these caste words are written with some adjectives that people select purposefully for fun sake, but these words represent their identity too. For example, *Gujjar Badshah*, *Zidi Gujjar* (sr.21 table 4.1) etc. Similarly, caste word can be seen with nicknames also, like *Mian Bablu* (sr.53 table 4.1)
- iii) Professions: Professional identity is the sense of oneness that individuals have with a profession. Instead of personal or family identity some people express their professional identity by writing it on their vehicles such as *doctor*, *engineer* etc (sr.28, 65 table 4.1). Sometimes people express their roles and the degree to which they are member of a profession. For example, they specify either they are *advocate of High court* or *attorney at law* (sr.23, 12 table 4.1).
- iv) Offices / Govt. Departments: One principle of CDA is that power relations are both negotiated and performed through discourse. Besides professional identity, sometimes people like to attract others by writing the names of their concerned departments. They highlight their association to media, police etc. Examples from the data are inscriptions such as, *Press*, *Daily Nawa-e-waqat*, *CM Office*, *ARY NEWS*, and *D/O Advocate General Punjab*, *Lahore High court* (sr. 15, 42, 44, 81, 86 Table 4.1).
- v) Institutes: Educational institutes are of great importance in shaping and transmitting cultural values among students in addition to teaching. Presently they have become prestige markers in the society also. Students and employees feel pride and show their association to any of such prestigious institutions. They express their identity by writing the names of these institutes like, *GIKI (Ghulam Ishaq Kahn Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology)*, *UCP (University of Central Punjab)*, *Punjab Group of Colleges*, *NUML (National University of Modern Languages)*, *LUMS (Lahore University of Management Sciences and UMT (University of Management and Technology* (sr. 7,

- 32, 45, 70, 90, 97 Table 4.1). Sometimes it is done by using adjectives used for the graduates of such institutes. *RAVIAN* (*Government College University*), *Aitchisonian* (*Aitchison College*), *Crescentarian* (*The Crescent School*), *Formanite* (*Forman Christian College University*), and *FASTIAN* (*FAST*) are examples (sr. 29, 49, 64, 75, 76, Table 4.1) from the data.
- vi) Brands: Some people are brand phobic. They show it off to others through use of interesting phrases on their vehicles. These phrases reveal their identity of feeling good or bad for some brands. A few such examples can be *Knight Rider*, *KLAIR*, *TIK TOK*, *Allied CAT*, *RAKOOB*, *BERETTA* and *Extreme gamer* (sr. 19, 21, 31, 36, 71, 77, 89, Table 4.1).
- vii) Religion: One of the six categories that Elias (2003) identifies in decorating trucks in Pakistan is use of religious symbols and images. This is not restricted to truck art but can be seen on other vehicles also. Since Pakistan is an Islamic country, a lot many phrases (names of God and his holy prophet 'PBUH', mashallah) and verses from the Holy Quran (sr. 14, 38, 88 Table 4.1) can be found written on vehicles. That clearly represent Muslim identity of the owner or driver. Similarly, inscriptions like '*I ♥ Convent of Jesus and Mary and Lord is my Shepherd*' (sr. 50, 87 table 4.1) express one's love towards *Jesus* and *Mary* and reveal Christian identity. Besides Muslim and Christian identity, these religious inscriptions show sectarian identity of the people also. For example, *labbaik ya rasoolallah, malangni data di, haq wali- sach wali- khawaja g sarkar, mujhe dawat e islami se pyar hai, assalatu wassalamu alaika ya rasoolallah, shah jamal sarkar, karman wala Sarkar, ganj bakhs e faiz e alam* (sr 22, 39, 52, 66, 72, 78, 94, 95 table 4.1) are preferred by the followers of Brelvi sect and statements '*mere liye Allah hi kafi ha* and *hum sab ke sab hamaray, hum rab ke rab hamaray*' (sr. 96, 100 table 4.1) represent identity of Deobandi sect. Brelvi sub-sect of Islam was founded by Ahmed Raza Khan (1856-1921) of Brailly, a city in India and Deobandi sect was founded in 1867 at Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband in India (Sanyal, 1996). Similarly, inscriptions like *sadqa panjtan pak da, salam ya Hussain, al hussain misbah ul huda, ya Ali madad, kheima e sadaat, nouker ghazi da, kaaba Ali da jannat Hussain di* and *ya abu alfazal al Abbas* (sr. 3, 6, 24, 27, 32, 55, 68, 83 table 4.1) represent identity of Shia community and love for Ahal e Bait. Some people use religious images that show their identity. For example, image of sword and date trees exhibit identity of sub sect Ahle Hadith, whereas flag (alam) and hand (panja) represent someone's belonging to Shia community.
- viii) Politics: Politics is organized control over a human community, particularly a state. It is an activity of achieving and exercising positions of governance. Every country has different political parties and people associate themselves to certain political parties. Language on the wheels expresses people's political identity also. Statements or slogans like *tabdeli aa nhi rahi tabdli aa gayi ha, go nawaz go*, and *jiye bhutto* (sr. 10, 37, 57 tale 4.1) clearly reveal political liking of the writers towards Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Sometimes instead of words, certain images are used for the same purpose such as the use of electoral emblem of any political party.
- ix) Patriotism: Patriotism is an ideology of love and devotion to a homeland. Some people like to express their quality of being patriotic soul through their use of language on vehicles. Slogans like *Pak fouj tujhe salam, Pakistan army* and *Pakistan zindabad* (sr. 43, 69, 99 table 4.1) express patriotic identity of these vehicle owners or drivers.

- x) Numbers: Numerology studies beliefs and relationship between numbers and coinciding events. Some people believe in numbers and they consider some number as their lucky number. Numbers like 786 (*numerical value of Arabic letters of Holy Quran*), GTK 007 (sr. 60, 74 table 4.1) reveal identity of people and their belief in numbers. Sometimes the case is entirely different, and people write their contact number that too is the identity marker of a person to be contacted such as 0800-72572, 0348-4014859 (sr. 54, 73 table 4.1).
- xi) Lawfulness: Some people are very law-abiding citizens. They share public service messages like “*Arrive alive, don’t text and drive, how am I driving? ‘L’, Not drunk*, etc (sr. 4, 26, 40, 75 table 4.1) for public awareness and express their identity of being lawful.
- xii) Aphorism: This includes lessons or morals that one learns from elders and life. By writing sentences like *maan ki dua jannat ki hawa, ye sab mere maan baap ki dua hai, maanwan thandia chawan, dekh magar pyar se* and *jalne wale ka moonh kala* (sr. 5, 33, 34, 82, 84 table 4.1) etc, people share their identity of being advisor to others through their lessons. Sometimes people like certain poetic verses (sr. 79, 98 table 4.1) for the same purpose, which besides being advisors share their identity of poetry lovers.
- xiii) Art and Graphics: Some people like to share their feelings through graphics. In this way, they express their identity of being art lovers. These graphics include logos of famous brands, floral and abstract patterns and images of birds.
- xiv) Humour: Some people are jolly and playful in their life. They express certain humorous messages that exhibit their identity of being joyful. Inscriptions like *pass ker ya berdashat ker, rul te gayen aan per chas bari ayi e, tu lang ja sadi khair ey, te hun asi kon ho gaye*, and *pyar te karan per tankhawa bari thori ey* (sr. 11, 17, 25, 35, 63) are examples of it.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The analysis of the data indicates that people prefer different inscriptions to be written on their vehicles. These inscriptions are written in Arabic, English, Urdu and Punjabi languages. These inscriptions are written by using different techniques like use of phrases, sentences, numbers and sometimes graphics. These not only attract people around through their themes but exhibit different identities of the vehicle owners and drivers also. Analysis of data reveals that people express their personal (names), social (castes, profession, office, institution, patriotism, religion and politics) identities through different inscriptions written on their vehicles. Moreover, identities of people’s love for art, traffic rules, lessons of life and humour can also be noted.

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